



*"Committed to the protection and promotion of public health."*

## Gallatin City-County Health Department

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### **NOROVIRUS: GUIDELINES FOR PREVENTION**

*This document was designed as a multi-purpose tool for use in a variety of settings*

#### **Source of Noroviruses and Means of spread**

Noroviruses are a group of viruses that cause the "stomach flu" or gastroenteritis in people. Noroviruses are found in the stool or vomit of infected people and can be spread in many ways including:

- Eating food or drinking liquids that are contaminated with norovirus;
- Touching surfaces or objects contaminated with norovirus, and then placing their hand in their mouth;
- Having direct contact with another person who is infected and showing symptoms (for example, when caring for someone with illness, or sharing foods or eating utensils with someone who is ill).

This virus is very contagious and can spread rapidly throughout home and work environments.

#### **Personal Hygiene:**

Good personal hygiene, especially hand washing, minimizes the spread of norovirus.

Wash hands thoroughly after using the toilet and frequently throughout the day. Use the following procedure:

- Use soap and warm water.
- Wash for at least 20 seconds.
- Cover your palms, the back of your hands, in between your fingers, and under your fingernails with suds.
- Rub and scrub! It's the suds and the friction that kill germs.
- Use a disposable paper towel to turn off faucet.
- Use a new towel to dry hands and to open the restroom door before you leave.

Alcohol-based hand sanitizers are not a substitute for hand washing with soap and water. Use hand sanitizers after washing hands.

## **Cleaning Requirements:**

Non-visibly soiled areas should be disinfected with chlorine bleach. If an equivalent disinfectant such as *Lysol* or *Pinesol* is used, they may require 2 to 4X more concentration than the manufacturer's recommendation to kill the virus.

Chlorine bleach concentrations and mixing instructions – always follow manufacturer safety precautions:

- For non-porous surfaces, tile floors, counter-tops, sinks and toilets: 1/3 cup bleach in 1 gallon of water (1:50 dilution)
- Solution must remain on surfaces for 20 minutes and rinsed if surface will come into contact with skin or food
- Do not spray solution on to surfaces; instead, apply solution to surfaces with sponge or cloth
- Persons working with bleach solution should wear protective gloves, goggles and masks

The following items should be regularly disinfected:

Doorknobs, faucets, sinks, toilets, commodes, bath rails, phones, counters, chairs (including backs), tables, handrails, elevator buttons, light switches, crib mattress covers, aprons, uniforms, linens, bedding and ice machines.

### **Bathroom cleaning:**

It may be necessary to clean and disinfect public bathrooms more often, at least every hour.

### **Health Concerns with using Chlorine Bleach**

- Use only in well-ventilated areas
- Use disposable gloves, masks, eye protection or face shields, and gown or protective clothing

## **Reporting Illness:**

Persons experiencing illness consistent with norovirus symptoms such as vomiting, diarrhea, nausea, and/or stomach cramping, please report the incident immediately to the Gallatin City-County Health Department at 406-582-3100 or 582-3120.